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**Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues**
**Third session**
New York, 10-21 May 2004
Item 3 of the provisional agenda*
**Special theme of the session: "Indigenous women"**

# Information received from the United Nations system

## Note by the Secretariat

**Addendum**

## United Nations Development Fund for Women**

* E/C.19/2004/1.
** The present document was submitted late to ensure the inclusion of the most recent information.

04-28149 (E) 020404

*Executive Summary*

The situation of indigenous women in development processes is of significant importance to UNIFEM, particularly in the Latin America and Asia and Pacific regions. UNIFEM's programme focuses on advocacy for indigenous women's rights and eliminating discrimination. UNIFEM's approach rests on mainstreaming gender and women's human rights in its programme by engaging indigenous groups, particularly women, boys and girls, and enhancing civic engagement through strategic partnerships between associations and advocate groups.

In Latin America, the UNIFEM regional office for the Andean region is currently increasing its involvement to boost participation of indigenous women's groups in local, national, regional and global events and encourage their inclusion in project initiatives. In Asia, the UNIFEM regional office in Bangkok fosters alliance building between local, national regional NGOs, such as in the Philippines, to spur and launch advocacy for the rights of indigenous women.

## A. Reponses to recommendations addressed exclusively to UNIFEM

1. There are no recommendations targeted exclusively at UNIFEM.

## B. Responses to recommendations addressed to UNIFEM and other agencies

*The Forum "encourages United Nations bodies whose activities have an impact on indigenous children and youth ..."*

2. In targeting indigenous children and youth as a critical constituency to prepare the future generation, UNIFEM seeks to implement the ECOSOC recommendation by focusing on gender and human rights, ensuring that its work is catalytic. In addressing youth as a target group, UNIFEM ensures that gender and human rights are embedded in programming and activities, and that youth are empowered through knowledge of basic human rights and gender issues.

*The Forum recommends collaboration in preparing for the Latin American conference of indigenous children and youth in 2004.*

3. The UNIFEM regional office in Latin America seeks to contribute to the UN agencies collaboration by infusing gender perspectives and emphasise human rights.

## C. Other significant information regarding recent policies, programmes, budgetary allocations or activities regarding indigenous issues

4. UNIFEM supports strategies for empowering women by fostering capacity building of indigenous women movements and initiatives in the Latin America and the Asia and Pacific regions. Interventions address and develop responses to gender and ethnic discrimination, as well as domestic abuse. The focus placed on strengthening capacity of indigenous women associations, and groups seeks to equip them with technical skills and bargaining power that propel them to advocate for their rights as

indigenous women, to meet local needs for themselves, their families and communities.

5. Approaches tackle the combined gender and ethnic discrimination, power differentials and vested interests, and to empower indigenous women to become fully engaged in civil society participation and be recognised as significant voices that influence mainstream development and decision-making. One underlying strategy rests in utilising local knowledge and in building synergies with human rights advocates and women rights associations, as well as in fostering leadership to protect and sustain capacity investments.

6. In Latin America, the strategy pursued is by integrating indigenous women in regular gender programmes. In the Philippines, UNIFEM's programme enhances the capacity of local NGOs in advocating for indigenous women's rights, and helps forge alliances that are critical for effecting policy change and implementing policies.

## D. Information and suggestions regarding the special theme of the third session "Indigenous Women"

7. UNIFEM is supporting the April 2004 event in Lima, Peru. The "Indigenous Leaders of the Americas" provides a platform for reflection and analysis, dialogue and networking on critical themes and issues related to their living conditions, empowerment, collaboration and political participation. The conference furnishes a space for elaborating priorities and defining the functions of the network as a strategic framework, through a consensual process. The results should therefore lead to developing a strategic, operational and planning process supported by clear guidelines.

8. UNIFEM suggests that the forum underscore the links to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Efforts will encourage synergies by channelling support and resources and gathering findings and good practices - including through a common database.

## E. List of conferences and meetings under UNIFEM in 2004-05

9. There are no specific meetings under UNIFEM in 2004-05 at present.